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AN ARCTICK ISLANDER IN LONDON.

By the Author of Extracts from a Lawyer's Portfolio.

(Concluded from page 94.)

THE preceptress was diligent in whispering her news, and several cards of invitation arrived to fashionable evening parties. I was engaged to Lady Townly's "at Home" on Monday, and intended him to accompany me in strict incognito, relying on the phlegm and apathy of his disposition to insure a proper degree of *insonciance*, or easy negligence, in his behaviour. And to prepare him for the dazzling effect of our beauties seated in all the glory of white satin, blond, and pink roses. I would have conducted him to the Exhibition, had not its season been past; but a fashionable portrait painter's gallery was open, and it seemed the best representation of that circle of living paintings called a party. Contrary to my expectance, he threw himself into such an attitude as I have seen in my grand-aunt's picture of Celadon, and exclaimed, with great vehemence, "Kuryeleeson! kuryeleesonmow!"—Being requested to explain the meaning of these words, he answered very frankly, that he used them without knowing it, but believed they were the names of saints once worshipped by the ancestors of his colony. I informed him, that his ignorance what they

meant rendered them proper enough for a polite expletive; but as they really implied an appeal for mercy, they were not so spirited as the delightful readiness for perdition expressed by an Englishman's interjections. Neonous thanked me for the hint, and promised in future to employ as his conversation-oath a very powerful and sonorous word preserved by his country's traditions, as one of those relicks which I suppose to be of Greek literature.

"Shouldero'muttonacaponhalfagoosepasty-venison."

A magnificent compound which every college student will be able to analyse and digest. On our way to Lady Townly's conversazione, I entreated him to suppress any sensations of surprise and admiration which her assembly might create—"Not, my dear Neonous, because any symptoms of natural feeling would lessen your effect, for they would have the charm of novelty, and the justification of your recent arrival among us; but as it has been whispered that you possess the art of making diamonds by adding a proper proportion of carbonick gas to charcoal, such symptoms might expose you to manœuvres,"—This

last word required a very long explanation, which he heard with surprising coolness.—“Then,” said he, after a grave pause, “you permit two kinds of marriages, as we do. We keep the great one for rare occasions, and celebrate it as you have heard by the ordeal of fire and water; but the common kind is managed by manœuvres.”—“Is it possible that they exist even in your frozen region?”—“Where can they exist so properly? We see them every day among the Esquimaux savages. Each lover throws a hundred burnt sticks at his beloved, and she who can catch the most is the richest bride; which is what you call manœuvring, I suppose, in London.”—It was not necessary to explain that our system wanted the addition of sticks, which might be very appropriate among its contrivers; and after a few more cautions, we entered the rout—rather too early perhaps, as it was scarcely midnight. Consequently the whole brilliance of the scene was not collected, and Neonous walked among the groupes of gazing belles with such placid indifference and easy languor, that one or two strangers mistook him for Sir Pertinax Townly himself, whose desire to see an Arctick Islander induced him to appear once in his wife’s company. When musick began, I took the opportunity, as usual, of talking to my friends, and had answered a thousand questions before I perceived the subject of them walking with an air of great attention behind some lovely young woman. Shocked at his danger, and at the ridicule such a proof of savage simplicity provoked, I went to observe his movements, and found he was employed, not in wonder and admiration, but in placing behind each of the enormous combs which supported the rear of their head-dresses one of the gilt cards given by the polite

preceptress whose visit I have mentioned, containing a long list of the sciences she taught.—“You told me these had been her pupils,” said Neonous very drily, in reply to my remonstrance.—“why should they not carry with them advertisements of the graces they have acquired, and the price paid for them? especially as they seem to have no other way of shewing that they know any thing of value.”—Though such an expedient might be very useful to young women of fashion, whose accomplishments are invisible and unguessed, I was compelled to acquaint Neonous that his device might render a duel unavoidable.—“Whatever pastime is usual here will be agreeable to me!” replied my Arctick Islander, with a yawn which was fortunately mistaken for a bass-accompaniment to the glee Lady Townly had begun: “Only tell me whether English duels are eaten in one, two, or three doses?”—I could only answer this question by asking another, and was informed that affairs of honour are decided in the polar regions by swallowing-snow balls, or by keeping the parties in ice two or three days.—When I expressed my surprise that they had none of the manly and elegant exercises called sparring, prize-fighting, &c. he replied, “We make our physicians and surgeons fight sometimes, Sir, to prove their skill. The fittest persons to give and take wounds or bruises are those who know how to cure them. But I have carried many accounts of duels to the Moon’s morning-post office.”

These words fixed the attention of Lady Townly, who understands every science, as Dr. Donne once said of an ancient Englishwoman, “from predestination to skein silk.” She listened with rapturous astonishment to her Arctick visitor’s assurance that the lightness of their atmosphere rendered an ascent to

the moon practicable, and that a lunarian mail was actually established in Neonousland.* He added that a cylinder filled with oxygen would derive impetus enough from an air-gun of proportionable calibre, to transport us very far on the journey; and a pair of artificial wings, on the plan of those attached to Blanchard's balloon, might effect the rest. The scientific belle was in ecstasies. She had lounged so often on the Steyne, and wearied herself so completely with gazing on pale faces in a pump room, that a trip to the Moon promised a thousand novelties in addition to the splendid notoriety of such an achievement. If it should be successful, what intelligence she would bring to the philosophick world, what importations of gossamer gauze and spider nets from the milliners of a lighter element, and what instructions to the Whip Club and *Almanack des Gourmands* respecting the newest flourish of a comet's drive, and the flavour of carp in the Moon's lakes! To construct a balloon of sufficient diameter, I proposed to buy the canvas used in making the Temple of Concord a few years ago, or to form a collection of all the old silk parasols in the kingdom. Neonous remarked, that no cargo would be required, except a few phials of that celebrated German elixir which is said to answer all the purposes of meat and drink, as no inns can be found in the air; cork hats, coats of Indian rubber, and head-dresses of spun-glass, or a little Tricosian fluid, as artificial appendages might be apt to change colour by the way. This hint alarmed the lady, and induced her to ask what kind of hair distinguished the Moon's peo-

ple.—“Madam,” replied Neonous, very gravely, “in some of the lunar provinces they have no heads. The Moon is a kind of work-shop, from whence Nature sends men like bundles of canes, to be headed with brass, gold, or tortoise-shell, in this world.”—Lady Townly cast a melancholy glance at her husband, which seemed to imply that she considered herself a twig of myrtle tied to a crabstick; while Sir Pertinax drily inquired if any trees ornamented the Moon, and how they grew.—“With their roots upwards, no doubt!” interposed his wife, “if they live upon air; and if, as Fontenelle says, the atmosphere affords no rain, they are probably nursed by a steam-engine.” Then, with another expressive glance, she hoped the Moon contained an infirmary for fools, and was told that a larger planet seemed to be kept for their accommodation. In the eagerness of her enterprising spirit, she insisted upon shewing our Arctick philosopher a machine constructed by her father, my learned friend Dr. Blinkensop. This machine, which for certain reasons he had placed on the roof of the house, resembled a canoe in shape: and Lady Townly having conducted Neonous to view it, suggested that it might be attached to their balloon, to serve as the car or parachute. They seated themselves in it, to consider and ascertain its fitness perfectly; but at that unfortunate moment, Dr. Blinkensop being mentally agitated by the philosophick questions connected with the Arctick expedition, dreamed that the Isabella was split on an ice-rock. Starting up in his sleep, he ran to the roof, cut the ropes which held his new-invented life-boat, and the two projectors descended in it to the ground, as a Dutch philosopher once did in a boat which he had prepared for a second deluge. Sir Pertinax was rather surprised to find his

* Still greater was her delight when he recited a specimen of lunar poetry, which I have endeavoured to arrange in English verse, under the title of “The Arctick Moon.”

wife had rolled from the roof to the area as safely in her canoe, as a celebrated antiquarian is said to have fallen down stairs in a vase of true Pompeiian clay. But our Arctic Islander's skull seems incurably fractured, though the professor endeavoured to arrange the fragments according to the art of French surgery, and to cement them with Vancouver's iron-glue. My only consolation is to preserve this history of the week he spent in London, and to translate the brief record of his colony's origin, which I received from him, and shall transmit to you as the last memorial of his existence. V.

THE HERMIT IN LONDON,

OR,

SKETCHES OF ENGLISH MANNERS.

From the Literary Gazette, for Sept. 1818.

SITTING FOR A PICTURE.

Painter. It is a pretty mocking of the life:
Here is a touch; Is't good?

Poet. I'll say of it,
It tutors nature; artificial strife
Lives in these touches, livelier than life.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Timon of Athens.*

Each heavenly piece unwearied we compare,
Match Raphael's grace with much lov'd Guido's air,
Carracci's strength, Corregio's softer line,
Paulo's free stroke, and Titian's warmth divine.

Yet still her charms in breathing paint engage,
Her modest cheek shall warm a future age,
Beauty, frail flower, that every season fears,
Blossoms in these colours for a thousand years.
POPE.

Painting, dejected, views a vulgar band,
From every haunt of dulness in the land,
In heathen homage to her shrine repair,
And immolate all living merit there.

SHEE'S *Rhymes on Art.*

"DO now be a good creature, and accompany me to my painter's," were Lady Jane Mandeville's words on perceiving me at the Cocoa-tree door, and on stopping her carriage, "There is nothing so stupid as sitting for one's picture," continued she, "and I know that you are a good soul, and will amuse me with your society during the trying hour of being studied by the painter. Upon my word, I wonder how many a handsome timid girl can stand the trial: it is quite awful: besides,

one is so apt to get into low spirits from the effect of ennui, and it is so excessively tiresome. So step into the carriage, and I shall be forever obliged to you. I have given two sittings; yet I perceive something wanting to the likeness, which I am at a loss to describe, and which your superiour judgment will point out."

The last compliment acted on me as a bribe; yet I saw that it was her Ladyship's intention to make a convenience of me. My age, however, and my habits, favoured the thing: I was weak enough to be pleased with a remark so much in my favour, and to comply. We arrived at the painter's, and were shewn into the room where the easel and half finished portrait stood. Lady Jane looked it through, examined, looked again, shook her head, and appeared dissatisfied. "That," said she to me, "is not me; it wants something; what is it?" "It wants life," replied I, "it wants the variety of expression of your countenance, which changes frequently, and thus cheats the artist of the likeness which he, for a moment, had in his power; another expression, agreeable and engaging, presents itself to his view; and he is compelled to quit the last play of features, which, if continued,

would have been perfect. Thus, for instance, you smiled; he caught that smile; but it died upon your lips and in your eyes just as he was impressing it on the canvass. He looks up; he finds you pensive and grave: another countenance; "Pray my Lady, smile again:" you cannot: the next attempt is unnatural; it is not a smile; the artist is puzzled; he looks at you again and again; the charm of the last smile is broken; you make a dozen unsuccessful attempts in order to satisfy the painter; you grow impatient; the placidity of your brow is ruffled; the artist lays down his brush; he too is out of temper, but he cannot shew it; he pauses, he reflects; he begs you to sit unconcerned; "Sorry to give you so much trouble;" what can he do?—He paints upon recollection, and fails. Now had an approved and approving, a loved and loving swain been before you, and had said, "Lovely Lady Jane, smile as you did this moment, for it was the most wily, winning smile I ever beheld," you would have immediately smiled all heart, and the painter would have seized the happy moment."

"You are a wicked man, a practised flatterer, a gay deceiver," exclaimed her Ladyship, hitting me amicably with her parasol; "but do tell me what the picture wants? It is stiff; it is grave; it looks like a woman of thirty: in short, it is not me: and I have half a mind not to take it."—I saw immediately its defects in *her* eyes: it was not handsome enough—not ten years younger than herself—in a word, not sufficiently flattering; but I could not tell her so. "It wants," resumed I, "as I said before, your play of features; it cannot, like you, say the most amiable things in the world, nor do the most friendly ones; it has not your wit, your conversation, your knowledge of the world, and your obliging dis-

position—such things exist not in canvass: and it is not the painter's fault. Perhaps," continued I, "it has a little too much colour." "Not a bit," (for she was pleased with its improved complexion;) "but," concluded she, "it is too old." "Perhaps it may." She was deeply dissatisfied.

We now heard very loud talking in the next room. She recognised Mrs. Blossom's voice. "Let us listen," said she, "it is that vain creature, Mrs. Blossom! I'm sure if Mr. Varnish takes a faithful likeness of her, it will be a fright, and it will be the first faithful thing about her." "How severe!" said I; "Oh! I hate her," answered her Ladyship; "but hush." Upon listening attentively, we discovered that she was come to get her daughter Laura's portrait taken. The poor artist was to be pitied. Nothing could satisfy her. It had been far more candid to have said, I must have a Venus instead of my daughter; you must make this woman an angel in picture; the colours must breathe—there must the *spirant colore* of the Italian artist; yet it must be my daughter in spite of nature and of art. "I will have my Laura painted at her harp," said Mrs. Blossom. "She must be clad in white—light drapery of exquisite design—her bosom and her arms bare—a lily of the valley in the former—her raven locks fancifully arranged—one shed over her forehead—a favourite ringlet straying o'er her ivory neck"—"You paint so beautifully yourself, Madam," observed the artist, "that I shall execute nothing half so well; but the young lady will make a most interesting (laying a false emphasis on resting) picture; and I will do my best to please you; your idea is excellent, and I shall follow it with the utmost care." "Yes," resumed Mrs. Blossom, "I am allowed to have a very fine taste

for painting."—(for painting herself she had.)

"But stop, not so quick," exclaimed Mrs. Blossom, "another thought has come into my mind—I will have her painted at full length—a light drapery hanging over one shoulder—the other quite bare—her hair *a la victime* behind, and fastened up on the top of the head—one lock over the left shoulder, long, full, and natural, and finely contrasted with the whiteness of her bosom—her head half turned—(this was enough to turn it altogether)—her eyes drooping—a book in one hand—the other arm reclining on an elegantly executed pillar."—"Very good, indeed!" cried the painter, "the young lady's fine silken eye-lashes and full eyes will have a fine effect in this pensive attitude."

"Not at all," interrupted the partial and fanciful mother; "now I have a better thought: she shall be painted as Diana—a beautiful greyhound of ours at her feet, which will be a double advantage, as it will bring in a favourite—then we will have her drapery looped up in front, and her well proportioned, finely turned instep, etcetera, thus displayed to advantage—her bow suspended from her shoulders—the head-dress exactly like that of the goddess in question." "Admirable!" exclaimed Mr. Varnish, "Or if she were drawn as Hebe, or—"

Here we had no longer patience, and we left our listening station. "Fool!" cried Lady Jane, and ringing the bell, ordered the footman to remind his master, that Lady Jane Mandeville was waiting, and that she was pressed for time. The Artist entered, all confusion and excuses, and told us that he had been detained for an hour by a lady, who at last went away undetermined as to how her daughter was to be drawn.

Lady Jane, who had so blamed and so ridiculed Mrs. Blossom for her conceit and fantasticalness, now began herself to play the difficult. She found a thousand faults with the picture, and was quite angry with me for not finding a thousand more. "The eye wants light," observed she; "I will give it a little," answered the painter. "And the bosom should be fuller." He made it so, although it was nearer the truth at first. "It is too old," said she next. He retouched it. The likeness, or rather the portrait, was more flattering. (Lady Jane) "That's better! Now I'll have the head-dress altered; it shall be like those of the Greek models. (Artist) "Your Ladyship shall be obeyed." "And that nose again is frightful. I am sure that I have not that pert turned-up thing which you have given me." The painter looked all confounded: his eyes said, "Pray what nose would your Ladyship please to have?" but he could not express himself so. He pondered, and at last painted a very handsome nose, quite unlike the original; for Lady Jane is pleasing, without the least pretensions to regularity of features, or to what may be termed beauty, and she has precisely the nose objected to.

By this time the picture was grown very unlike indeed. "That's better," said she, with a nod and a smile. "Come, my friend," continued she, addressing herself to me, "tell me some of your excellent anecdotes, in order to put me in good humour with myself."—"And with me also," modestly added the painter. "There, my Lady, that smile will do inimitably." She turned her head and was uneasy; she looked all impatience; it was lost. "You do not sit so well as you did yesterday—not so pleasantly, nor in such good spirits," observed the artist. "Oh! I re-

member—yes, I had that rattle George Myrtle of the Guards with me, who kept talking nonsense to me the whole time of my sitting; do excuse me for this morning, and I'll come again to-morrow, and bring him with me." Mr. Varnish dropped his brush, and bowed disappointment—"Just as your Ladyship pleases."

We all rose together; and as he was conducting us to the door we met Mrs. Versatile and Lady Bellamy. "Do, my love," said the former to Lady Jane, return with me to the painting room, and see if you can find out my portrait; it is not quite finished, although I have sat ten times."—"Yes," interrupted the artist, "for ten minutes each time;" "But," continued she, "if the likeness be striking, you will know it immediately." We re-entered the room, and, by an approving smile and a glance of Mrs. Versatile's, we discovered a most beautiful picture to be her's; not by the likeness, but by her self-satisfaction at being so flattered. We both agreed that it was uncommonly like. Lady Bellamy grew pale with envy; and Lady Jane observed hastily, "Mr. Varnish has not taken half so much pains with my picture as with yours." He modestly answered, "Madam, it is not yet finished;" whilst Mrs. Versatile smiled disdain, as much as to say, "Poor silly thing! do you ever expect to look half so well as me?"

Mrs. Versatile then addressed herself to the artist. "Mr. Varnish, I really do (laying a stress on the last word) beg your pardon for being so troublesome to you, but you must excuse me to-day: I was up all night at a quadrille ball; and I shall fall asleep, or do nothing but yawn if I sit down (turning to the looking-glass;) I protest that I look quite a fright; I will not (the *not* sounded very positive and emphatically) sit to-day." He bowed sub-

mission; and it came out afterwards that she had disappointed him five times running: once she was engaged to a *dejeuné*; once she had a sick head-ache; the third time she disapproved of her dress, which was to be changed; next she looked too pale after riding; and lastly, she was fluttered and put out of temper, and could not, as she called it, "bear herself, because she looked so unbecoming."

To all these changes of temper and disappointments are artists exposed: Her Grace is so disordered by the high wind, that she is not fit to be seen;—Lady so and so has had no rest, and her eyes look quite red;—Miss Lovemore is so fidgetty that she cannot sit still; she is going to a waltz party, and will put off the sitting until to-morrow.—Lady Bellamy now put in her word, for she had a picture which did not half please her, and which was to be altered. "Mr. Varnish," said she, "my husband does not approve of my picture (the case with many husbands thought I :) he says that it is a stiff, prim, formal piece of stuff." The painter looked all patience. "It is not half as gay as I am (some truth in that;) it is unlike about the eyes; it must be touched up again and improved; besides, my husband says that he must have me in an easy undress, instead of that crimson robe and feathers." "Just as your husband pleases," answered the tormented artist.

We now took our leave; and Lady Jane set me down at Hookham's, observing on the way, that Mrs. Versatile's picture was not a bit like her, that Mr. Varnish had made a perfect beauty of her; and that she much regretted having her portrait painted by him, as she did not admire his likenesses at all.

On my way home, I could not help ruminating on the painful task of the painter, and recollected that very few of the portraits, which we

saw in his show room, were strong likenesses of those for whom they were taken. The two great causes for this, however, were, that almost every body wishes to be flattered, while some others have the conceit of being painted in dresses foreign to their situation in life, and in which their acquaintances can never possibly have seen them.

There was, for instance, Lord Heavyhead in the costume of a Roman senator, which he is as like as he is to a windmill; the Rev. Mr. Preachard, in a scarlet hunting frock and black velvet cap, which he used to wear before his ordination, and a fox's brush instead of the Bible in his hands; a Captain Fairweather, in a suit of polished armour; a Mrs. Modish, as a Magdalen; and the Dowager Lady Lumber, as a sleeping Venus, having a little more modest drapery thrown over her. Now, who on earth could expect to discover their friends under such disguises? Yet to all these whims and fantasies must the painter submit. His task to please must be difficult.

Of one thing I was convinced, namely, that to picture our acquaintances and friends, or even publick characters, strict resemblance, without flattery, is necessary. The general expression of the countenance, the prevalent habit of the original, and the dress usually worn by her or by him, are equally requisite. Our wife or daughter should be a woman, and not a goddess; our friend or acquaintance should be a gentleman, and not a hero of antiquity; good execution and correctness of similarity should complete the portrait; else may we have a very fine picture, yet like nobody whom we know,—a mere matter of fancy.

With these remarks, and with this conviction I shall conclude, professing high esteem and pity for the meritorious artist thus exposed, and an irrevocable resolution never in future, by accompanying a fanciful lady to have her picture taken, to lose a morning of the

THE HERMIT IN LONDON.

SOME ACCOUNT OF MRS. BILLINGTON, *THE CELEBRATED SINGER.*

OF this extraordinary woman, the following account has been given in the Literary Gazette, evidently by one who knew her well; but we may add that some more anecdotes of her may be found in the memoirs of her most intimate and equally remarkable friend the late Lady Hamilton.

Mrs. Billington was the daughter of a travelling German musician of the name of Weichsell. He obtained some pupils in this country; and by the help of her mother's abilities, a tolerable singer at Vauxhall and the inferiour Concerts, he contrived to educate this girl and

her brother, the present violin player. Miss Weichsell exhibited the usual early facility of a musician's child. Practice under the tuition of her father, and some of the principal performers of the day, gave her a rapid mastery of the piano; her powers were turned to account, while her infancy still made her a spectacle; and at seven years of age she played a concerto at the Haymarket Theatre. Her practice and progress continued, and in her eleventh year, she exhibited her powers in a concerto of her own composition. One of her instruc-

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tors had been *Schroeter*, the finest pianist of his day. A later instructor was Mr. James Billington, a man whose name makes one of the deepest blots in the history of this woman. He was a musician in the Drury Lane Theatre, and a respectable person. He married her. Shortly after her marriage, in 1782, he took her to Ireland, with the idea of making her a publick singer. She was then what she was to the close of her life, a handsome woman. Daly, the Irish manager, was a showy libertine, and Mrs. Billington had the reputation of sharing his libertinism. The situation of Ireland at that time was peculiar. It was, in manners, between barbarism and civilization; in means between abject poverty and established opulence; in politicks, between slavery and constitution; it had all the disabilities of a middle state; the government, the popular habits, the publick mind, had the turbulent dislocation of an interregnum. The necessity, for such is the name of leading the new Legislature into the views of the English government, scattered an immense quantity of publick money among the members of the Irish parliament; the luckless visitation of a licentious Lord Lieutenant crowned the scheme of national seduction; and the hot blood of the Irish, Roman Catholick in all their habits, Protestant only in name, full of feudal extravagance, family pride, personal indulgence, and priestly superstition, was pampered into licentiousness of all kinds, almost without bounds, and without example. In these allusions to past times, we offer no disrespect to the feelings of a country which we value; but we speak the truth, and the broken sceptre and dismantled crown of Ireland, flung on the tomb of her constitution, are the melancholy proofs that the madness of her youth, prepared her for an early

mortality. Mrs. Billington figured for some years in this amphitheatre of vice, if not the most naked, one of the most notorious of its exhibitors. Dublin was not Athens, nor was Mrs. Billington *Aspasia*; yet men of distinguished talents were found among the crowd of her admirers, and the first orator of the Irish bar degraded his name, and insulted publick decency, by open association with the handsome singer. The Lord Lieutenant, a man who, when the tide of general dissipation was at its height, sat on the top of the tide, was understood to have worshipped the same *Circe*, and worshipped without being the engrosser of her spells.

In 1786, Mrs. Billington was engaged at Covent Garden Theatre, and made her debut as *Rosetta* in *Love in a Village*. Her success was not memorable. In Ireland her most productive pursuits had not been connected with the stage, and she had often experienced marks of publick neglect. In England the same effects of theatrical deficiency followed, without the same palliatives; and Mrs. Billington, no longer the favourite of the boudoir, was compelled to consult more diligently, the usual means of distinction on the stage. *Sacchini*, was at that time enchanting the gay and the great at Paris, and Mrs. Billington went over to learn a portion of his enchantments. She was intelligent and poor; she exercised herself, and her first distinction was the result of this Italian's lessons. She was re-engaged at Covent Garden Theatre, and gradually rose into favouriteism. Her voice was at that time wild and wandering, but of singular sweetness. *Sacchini* had failed of giving her science, but she already exhibited the elements of a great singer. The tour of Italy was once as indispensable to excellence in accomplishment as in the arts; and, in 1794, Mrs. Billington left

England for the land of song and seduction. Her progress was rapid in musick; in personal captivation she had little to learn; in personal profligacy nothing. The life of her unfortunate husband was first made miserable by her excesses, and finally made a sacrifice. He died suddenly of an apoplectick fit, according to one report; of poison, according to another; but the crime is not unsuitable to the country; we would unwillingly attribute it to an Englishwoman: it was probably the deed of some Italian lover. Mr. Billington, however, died in 1796, at Naples. His widow did not long act the Ephesian: in 1797, she married Mon. Florissant, a Lyonnese, purchased an estate at Venice, and seemed to have fixed herself there. In 1801, she suddenly reappeared in London, and the report which accounted for her return was, that she had been plundered of her property by some enamoured swindler. She was at that time at the height of her powers. The publick curiosity was strongly raised; engagements were offered to her at the same time at the King's Theatre, and at those of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. By an unusual arrangement, she played alternately at the two latter houses; but her first appearance was at Covent Garden, in the part of Mandane, in *Artaxerxes*. She was now, in all that caught the eye and ear, an extraordinary creature. Still within those years, when if the softness of youth be past, its fire remains; with her mind in its finest maturity, and her talent in its full perfection, she stood before the publick a noble, graceful, lovely woman, with a voice of touching sweetness, subtle in all the mysteries of Italian taste. She was considered the most accomplished singer that had ever been born in England. There was now an opportunity for her to turn away from sin and shame. Her return to England had interposed a salutary space between her past and her future life, and she might have reformed and almost retrieved herself. But after a period of publick triumph, she relapsed into her habitual course, and was understood to have lived with a man of the highest rank, till a short period before the grave closed on her degraded, fearful, guilty life. She had left England, and returned to her husband in Italy,* according to the sneer of fashion, from mere disgust of her stately connexion in England; the rumor is more kind, and we will hope more true, that assigns her departure to some of those awakened recollections which not unfrequently startle, and perhaps half redeem the vicious, as the end of life draws on. Her paramour was said to be in measureless dejection at her flight, and we will hope for him too, that he may have learned to extract a moral from his grief more important than the proof that profligacy is not unmixed pleasure. Mrs. Billington had at one time amassed much money. She was said to have lost 10,000*l.* in the plunder of the bank of Venice by the French; but she lived sumptuously in England after her retirement from the stage in 1808, and to the infinite disgrace of the high-born and high-bred, her *dejeunes* were attended by some people whose rank in life ought to have made them consider the effect of publick example.

She died on the 26th of August last, at St. Artien, near Venice.

* Monsieur Florissant had attempted to remove her from England several years before; but a sum of money and the Alien Act, induced him to retire without his faithless spouse.

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REMARKABLE INSTANCE OF SECOND SIGHT.

From Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.

[The following interesting little Narrative was communicated to us by a gentleman (to whom we are under various obligations,) who says, in his private letter. "Were I permitted to bring it forward, supported by all evidences who could speak to its truth, it could be established as the best authenticated of any of those instances which have been given of the 'seer's prophetick sight.' But delicacy forbids me to corroborate its truth by names, many connexions of the personages to whom the story relates being yet alive, who must still cherish a painful recollection of the fatal catastrophe." EDITOR.]

IT is now, I believe, about eighty years ago, since a festive party of ladies were assembled in the great hall of the baronial castle of ———, which is grandly situated in an unfrequented part of the country, in the northern extremities of the kingdom. It had then been for some time the scene of Highland hospitality and joy; for Sir Charles and Lady D——, two young lovers lately made happy in the possession of each other, had come from the neighbourhood of the Scottish border to spend some delightful weeks as the guests of Lord R——, the brother or uncle of the lady, for I forget in which of these degrees of relationship that nobleman stood towards her. The evening had closed, and the shrill sound of the bagpipe had already died away around the outer walls of the castle, having told to the clansmen that the feast was begun. Mirth held his jocund reign, and joyous smiles played on every youthful countenance that brightened the circle of the huge oaken table; whilst the heaped up faggots crackled in the ample grate, shooting a cheerful glare amidst the groupe. Care and anxiety were alike banished, excepting from the

thoughts of the lovely Lady D——, who, though she could not but participate in the general gladness her presence had created, yet felt even the temporary absence of all she now held dearest on earth. Sir Charles had accompanied Lord R——, on the preceding day, to visit the distant mansion of a neighbouring chieftain, for the limits of a neighbourhood are extended farther in regions where everything seems to participate in the greatness of the scale on which nature is herself displayed. Although the other females were well aware of the numerous chances which the warmth of Highland kindness afforded to prevent the departure of a guest on the appointed day, yet the restless emotions which Lady D—— felt, were excited in her own bosom by her husband's absence; she guessed, and guessed rightly, that no temptation, however powerful, could operate to delay his return, when its object was to regain the enjoyment of her society. She therefore continued still to expect him, after every one else had abandoned all expectation of his appearance. She started at every sound, and glanced her fine eyes hastily to the door at every footstep, nor could the assurances of her companions persuade her to dismiss her hopes, or convince her that it was not now at all probable that the gentlemen would arrive that night, late as it then was; but that it was more likely they had been prevailed on to remain, to participate in some hunting expedition, projected for the amusement of the southern stranger.

There sat another personage at that festive board, on whom mirth seemed to have little effect; its beams, which shot in every direc-

tion from the eyes of the young and the gay around her, fell on her high and marble features, and raven eye, like those of the sun on the dark cavern of some cheerless and sea-beaten crag, ingulphing, rather than reflecting its light. This was the Lady Assynt, who, to do honour to Sir Charles and his young bride, had been invited to the castle. But little had she added to the general mirth, for ever since her arrival, she had sat in the midst of hilarity, like the lonely cormorant on its rock, unmoved and regardless of the playful waves that murmured around her. Few attempts were made to bring her into the play of conversation, and even those few were soon silenced by chilling monosyllabick replies, delivered in a lofty and repulsive manner. She had been therefore left undisturbed to the full possession of her own gloomy thoughts. At last her very presence seemed to be almost forgotten, or, if observed at all, she was noticed with no other interest than were the stiff and smoke-discoloured portraits of family ancestry, that stared in sullen and silent majesty from the deep carved pannels of the ancient apartment where the party was seated.

The good-humoured jest, and the merry tale went round, and the laugh of youthful joy was at its highest,—when a piercing shriek produced a sudden and death-like silence, and directed every head towards the Lady Assynt, who seemed for a moment to be violently convulsed. The effect of such an unlooked for interruption to the general gaiety may be easily conceived. The ladies arose in confusion; every assistance was proffered; and numerous inquiries were made. But seeming to endeavour by a desperate effort, to summon up resolution to overcome the sudden nervous malady which apparently affected her, she put back both the

kind and the curious with a wave of her hand, and haughtily resumed her usual dignified and freezing deportment, without deigning to give any explanation.

It was sometime before the company was restored to its composure, and hilarity had hardly begun again to enliven it, when a louder and yet more unearthly shriek again roused their alarm, and raised them from their seats in the utmost consternation. The Lady Assynt now presented a spectacle that chilled every one. The same convulsion seemed to have recurred with redoubled violence. She started up in its paroxysm; and her uncommonly tall figure was raised to its full height, and set rigidly against the high back of the gothick chair in which she had been seated, as if from anxiety to retreat as far as its confined space would allow, from some horrible spectacle that appalled her. Her arms were thrown up in a line with her person; each particular bony finger was widely separated from its fellow; and her stretched eyeballs were fixed in glassy and motionless unconsciousness. She seemed for a time to lose all sense of existence, and, though in an upright posture, to have been suddenly struck into a stiffened corse. By degrees she began to writhe, as if enduring extreme agony: her livid lips moved rapidly, without the utterance of sound; until finally overcome by her sufferings, she sank within the depth of the antique chair, and remained for some minutes in a languid and abstracted reverie. The mingled anxiety and curiosity of the company was unbounded; numerous and loud were the inquiries; and of the inquiries, Lady D——, who seemed instinctively to apprehend something dreadful connected with her own fate, was the most earnestly solicitous of all. The Lady Assynt heeded not the

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swarm of interrogatories which buzzed around her. She looked at first as if she heard them not; then raising herself solemnly, and somewhat austere, from the reclining position into which she had dropped, she spread her hands before her, and sweeping them slowly backwards to the right and left, she divided the ring of females who surrounded her, and brought Lady D— full within the range of her vision. At first she started involuntarily at the sight of her; but melancholy and pity mingling themselves amidst the sternness of features to which such tender emotions seemed to have been long strangers, in a deep and articulate voice, and with a solemn and sibylline air, she slowly addressed Lady D—, whilst profound silence sat upon every other lip. "Let the voice of gladness yield to that of mourning! Cruel is the blow that hangs over thee, poor innocent dove! and sad is it for me to tell thee what thou art but too anxious to know. A vision crossed my sight, and I saw a little boat, in which were thy lord and Lord R—: it was tost by a sudden and tempestuous gust, that swept the dark surface of the loch in a white-ning line. I saw the waves dashing over the frail bark; and sorely did the two Highlanders who rowed them, contend with their oars against the outrageous whirlwind. I hoped, yet shuddered, from fear of the event.—Again the spirit of vision opened my unwilling eyes, and compelled me to behold that last wave, which whelmed them beneath the bursts of its tremendous swell. The land was near. Stoutly the drowning wretches struggled with their fate. I saw Lord R— and his sturdy servants, one by one, reach the shore; but—" "My husband!" shrieked Lady D— in anguish, as she grasped the arm of the seer, "Oh! tell me that my

husband was saved!"—"His body"—replied the Lady Assynt, in a lower and more melancholy voice—"His body was driven by the merciless waves upon the yellow beach: the moonbeam fell upon his face, but the spark of life was quenched." Lady D—'s death-like grasp was relaxed, and she swooned away in the arms of those who surrounded her. The Lady Assynt regarded her not: somewhat of her former convulsion again came upon her; and starting up in a frenzied manner, she exclaimed, in a piercing voice, scarcely distinguishable from a scream, "And now they bear him hither!—See how pale and cold he looks—how his long hair drips—how ghastly are his unclosed eyes—how blanched those lips where lately sat the warm smile of love!" Then sinking again, after a short interval, she continued in a more subdued tone, "He is gone for ever! No more shall he revisit his own fair halls and fertile fields. Yet is not all hope lost with him; for his son shall live after him, and bring back anew the image of his father."

The ladies were now busied about Lady D—, who lay in a deep faint. All seemed to be as much interested in her, as if the events described in the waking visions of the Lady Assynt had already actually happened. Yet every one affected to treat her words as the idle dreams of a distempered brain; although, in the very looks of the different speakers, there was a fear betrayed, that ill accorded with their words, manifesting the general apprehension that something tragical was to be dreaded. At last a confused noise seemed to arise from the under apartments of the castle; mutterings, and broken sentences, and half-suppressed exclamations, were heard on the great stairs and in the passages. The name of Sir Charles was frequently

repeated by different voices. The more anxious of the party tried to gain information by running to the windows. The flaring lights of torches were seen to hurry across the court-yard, where all seemed to be bustle and dismay. And then it was that the doleful sound of the bagpipe, playing a sad and wailing lament, came upon the ear from without the castle gate. A slow, heavy, and measured tramp of many feet upon the drawbridge told that a party of men were bearing some heavy weight across it. Unable longer to submit to the suspense in which they were held, the greater part of the females now rushed from the hall. A cry of horror was heard; and the mysterious anticipations of the gifted Lady Assynt were found to be, in truth, too dreadfully realized.

Lord R——, in the deepest affliction, told the sad tale, with all its circumstances. Though much pressed to remain, Sir Charles had resisted all the kind importunity of their host. Their homeward way lay across the ferry of ——. The sudden squalls affecting such inland arms of the sea are too well known: one of these had assailed them in the middle of the loch, and had been productive of the melancholy catastrophe. Nor was the prophetic conclusion of the seer's vision left unaccomplished. There was no suspicion of Lady D——'s pregnancy at the time; but such proved to be the case, and, according to the prediction, the child was a son, who lived the sole hope of an old and respectable family.

T. L. D.

VARIETIES.

From the New Monthly Magazine, for Nov. 1818.

THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO.
THERE are doubtless, few readers of this enchanting romance who have forgotten the appalling *veiled picture*, which occasioned so much alarm to the susceptible Emily, whilst exploring the uninhabited chambers of the castle of Udolpho. Mrs. Radcliffe reserves its explanation for her last volume, where in common with other "mysteries," it is duly elucidated; and turns out to be the representation, in wax, of a human form, nearly devoured by worms; before which, a previous occupant of the castle had been doomed to do daily penance, in order to expiate some deadly crime. It appears highly improbable, that the imagination of the ingenious authoress of these volumes of wonders, unbounded as it was, should have furnished her with an incident so singular and unaccountable, had not

her mind received some assisting suggestion, either in the course of her very various reading, or extensive travels. I am inclined to think, that in the earlier part of the last century, the revolting custom of exhibiting even publicly, the most disgusting emblems of our mortality, was by no means uncommon. Indeed, the emaciated figures, still observable in many of the cathedrals and ancient edifices of this country, bear abundant testimony of the likelihood of the conjecture. The mode of ornamenting grave stones from time immemorial, with the *skeleton head and cross bones*, is, I conceive, merely a modification of the custom, and intended to convey to the mind the same awful ideas of "death and judgment." On the continent there existed, before the French Revolution, some remarkable instances of the strictness or super-

stitution of the devotees: for many of the convents particularly those on the southern frontiers, possessed images, similar to that described by Mrs. Radcliffe; before which, the transgressing members of their communities, were obliged, by prayers and penance, to expiate the crimes of which they had been found culpable.

In the chapel, belonging to the Priory of the Celestine Monks, at Heverle, near the town of Louvain, in Brabant, is still exhibited a figure, executed in the most masterly manner, of the finest white marble, representing a human body in the last stage of putrefaction; with myriads of worms apparently in the act of devouring it. As such an object, in a situation so publick, could be by no means pleasing to general beholders, it is surrounded by a green curtain or *veil*, which is only removed when the image is applied to the purposes above alluded to. Now, as our admirable novelist is known to have travelled through this neighbourhood, it may readily be supposed, that, to a mind so romantick as hers, such a strange relic could not have been passed unnoticed; but must on the contrary, have had strong claims upon her attention; nor is it at all detracting from her exquisite talents to infer that it gave rise to the *veiled picture*, which forms so striking a feature in her "Mysteries of Udolpho."

LODGE.

There is a tract of great rarity in the British Museum, from which Shakspeare is stated to have borrowed the plot of "As you like it," entitled "Euphroe's Golden Legacy," by Thomas Lodge, a poet of the Elizabethan age, who was also the author of a great variety of valuable publications in prose, as well as verse. Ellis, in his "Specimens of the Early English Poets," has given three

of his poems from the "Pleasant Historie of Glaucus and Scilla," but has omitted to mention the following madrigal; the most beautiful, perhaps, of all his compositions. The edition from which it is transcribed is believed to be unique.

Love in my bosom like a bee
Doth suck his sweete;
Now with his wings he plays with me,
Now with his feete.

Within mine eyes he makes his nest,
His bed amid my tender breast;
My kisses are his daily feast,
And yet he robs me of my rest.

Strike I my lute—he tunes the string,
He musick plays, if I so sing;
He lends me every living thing,
Yet, cruel, he my heart doth sting.

What if I beat the wanton boy
With many a rod,
He will repay me with annoy,
Because a God.

Then sit thou safely on my knee,
And let thy bowre my bosom be;
O, Cupid, so thou pity me,
I will not wish to part from thee.

LEWIS'S MONK.

The outline of this romance is taken from the story of the Santon Barsissa, written by Sir R. Steele, and forming the 148th number of the Guardian. As a master of the horrible and mysterious Mr. Lewis has shewn considerable powers, and has woven his materials, borrowed from different sources, with much dexterity into an interesting whole. The language is fine, but the prurency of imagination such as to render it extremely dangerous and seductive. The success of this work induced many persons to put forth their powers on a similar subject; but among all its namesakes of the novel tribe, there is only one which will bear a comparison with it, namely, "Manfrone, or the One Handed Monk," which is its superior as well in execution, as in its moral tendency. W.

POETRY.

From the European Magazine.

THE ARCTICK MOON.

(By the Author of Extracts from a Lawyer's Portfolio.)

WHEN Briorn* sat on the land of ice,
Where the cloudy Storm-God hovers,
Ere the four stars looked from northern
skies,

Or the sons of the West were rovers,
The voice of his Sire he remembered not,
Nor the greeting by brothers spoken;
His home and his kindred were forgot,
But he knew his first love's token—
And the sound of his lost Therida's name
On his ear like the breath of the south wind
came.

For we who live in the bright full moon†
In her rainbow hover'd near him,
And we kept in her crystal halls a boon
In the lonely hour to cheer him:
Then about his pillow of snow we stole,
And we gave to the eye of his dreaming soul
A mirror that shew'd the fair array
Of the loveliest hours that had pass'd away.

In the folds of our silver light we keep
The joy that is lost too fleetly,
And we bring it again to bless the sleep
Of him who serves us meetly:
We watch his bed, for we send forth all
The souls of men from our crystal hall,
And the music that dreaming mortals hear
Is the distant choir of their native sphere.

We watch the maiden's funeral rite,
Ere the snowy cheek is shrouded,
To take again the spirit of light
That lived in her clay unclouded:
And we waft it away to our realms unseen,
Under icy arches broad and sheen,
Where a thousand gardens of lilies grace
The frozen Pole's eternal base.

Wo to the ear that has heedless heard
Our midnight song of warning!
And to him who wounds the azure bird
We send in the cloud of morning!

* This adventurer, when found at Spitzbergen by his countrymen, had forgotten his native language, and remembered nothing of his family till his wife's ring was shewn to him.

† The Arctick moon often remains a fortnight unchanged.

He shall see his gallant vessel near
The boat of the ocean-spider,
Its mast shall seem but a May-fly's spear,
And its cable the down of eider;
But when in the slumber of peace he lies,
That boat to a rock of ice shall rise;
When the gale is mute, and the hour is dark,
It shall hold in its chasm his rifted bark,
Till the mighty Serpent* has unfurl'd
The emerald folds that clasp the world.

But he who blesses our holy light
With a pray'r to them that guide it,
Shall steer his bark thro' the mists of night,
Though a whirlpool yawns beside it.
We will build for him our rainbow-bridge,
From the torrent's gulph to the mountain's
ridge;
His bark shall pass where the sea-snake's fin
Is not slender enough its way to win:
And our light of love to the darkest pole
Shall follow and bless our kindred soul. V.

* The Green Serpent of Midgard is supposed to encircle the world.

From the Literary Panorama.

PLATONICK LOVE.

BY J. DUNTON.

SINCE Love hath kindled in our eyes
A chaste and holy fire,
It were a sin if thou and I
Should let this flame expire.

What though our bodies never meet,
Love's fuel's more divine;
The fixed stars by their twinkling greet,
And yet they never join.

False meteors, who still change their place,
Though they seem fair and bright;
Yet, when they covert to embrace,
Fall down and lose their light.

If thou perceiv'st thy flame decay,
Come light thy eyes at mine;
And when I feel mine fade away,
I'll take fresh fires at thine.

Thus, when we shall preserve from waste
The flames of our desires,
No vestals shall maintain more chaste,
Nor more immortal fires.